

but also to fit them, as far as possible, to become self-supporting members of the community. The manual training given helps specially in this direction, as it is that kind of work which will be best suited to them afterwards. One boy, with one leg crippled, but otherwise as hale and lusty as possible, has already been apprenticed to a shoemaker, and one of my boys says he is going to be a tailor. In cases where the manual dexterity was very marked, they might be apprenticed to watchmakers, etc.

During the mid-day interval they play with their toys, romp about, and have stories read or told to them. In fine weather they play outside. I have sometimes had the "Babies" to teach, and the School Board method of learning to read is *too* funny. What would the "Practising School" and its inmates have been reduced to, if, from between the piano and the fireplace, there had issued this sweet chorus:—"a—t, at; a—t, at; a—t, at; h—a—t, hat; h—a—t, hat; h—a—t, hat.

a—d, ad; a—d, ad; a—d, ad: m—a—d, mad; m—a—d, mad; m—a—d, mad."

Do you not think we *would* have gone m—a—d, mad.

M. M. K.

NOTE.—I should have mentioned that mentally-defective children are not received as pupils, but there is a special class for them in the adjoining Public School.

SIDE LIGHTS ON THE STUDENTS.

I.—FROM THE THE SISTER'S POINT OF VIEW.

"That," said she, pouncing upon it with avidity, "is the first specimen of its kind I have seen this year." She pulled it up and placed it amongst the bunch of rapidly-dying flowers and weeds which she held in her left hand. I do not know what its name was. I never inquired, but it smelt foully.

All along the route of our (to me) never-ending walk, she had been darting ecstatically at some unobtrusive root or berry which I should never have noticed, and I fear (for she made me share her burden) our ultimate entry into the town must have been at least picturesque. Twin Ophelias, one with the madness of the botanist in her eye, the other with the dull light of despair—for I had on town boots.

But two days previously, my sister had returned from Ambleside, her training over, and behold! she was a new person and I knew her not.

For one thing, she knew everything. It was not that she thought she did; she did, and she gave her opinions. She seemed to have an intimate acquaintance with every book ever written and its author, but she brought with her, among others, two which were specially holy and sacred in her eyes. One, a fat red one, which was her creed. A creed which takes two whole years to learn. She was not selfish, only most ready and willing to unfold its bewildering theories to any who looked like possible disciples.

The other book was green. It consisted of pages of drawing paper only, and was, I imagine, a book of private confessions for merely personal perusal. I say this because, on glancing at it one day, inadvertently, I came upon a dated page upon which were the words "I saw a hedgehog to-day"—this and no more; underneath was a painting of the hedgehog. In this case I do not think my sister need have blamed herself severely. I should have run away myself if it looked like that. As the days passed on and her holiday lengthened, every day brought home to me more forcibly my inadequacy on intellectual lines. I found it such a terrible effort to keep up conversations with her—she knew so vastly more than I did on every given

subject, and talked so much better. I tried politics, trusting that as she was after all a mere woman, we might possibly be more on a footing on that subject. I timidly attacked the state of the nation at that time. She merely said with a note of finality in her voice that Chamberlain was certainly a capable man. She spoke approvingly, as one would speak of a child who was making much progress; intimately, as one who knew him in his darkest hours, and had seen him put on his boots. I tried no more politics. In Drama, it was just as bad; she knew all about the different plays, who wrote them, and whose style they were trying to imitate when they did write them. She asserted, with ease and confidence, that Stephen Phillips was certainly a second Shakespere, perhaps excelled Shakespere, and the only pity was that he was "fashionable." She was that rare anomaly, a man's woman and a woman's woman in one. She had many female cronies, and was essentially faithful and loyal to them all, though being far from blind to their faults. She let them have it straight when she thought they needed it; though it is only just to say that she was honestly grateful to anyone who did the same kind office for her and pulled her up sharply if any of her hobbies or idiosyncrasies threatened to submerge her.

She was an excellent companion to my dear father, where I, I fear, had been but a poor one. She could sympathise with him in all his favourite subjects, from cricket to archæology, and from stocks and shares to the philosophy of life, as set forth in the pages of the *Rubayat*. She was always cheerfully ready to discuss and argue, without losing her temper, though she would get wildly excited, and she had the rare gift of being silent at will, a good listener, and one who could draw out other people's conversational efforts and make them talk their best.

To most people, her attitude was one of slightly contemptuous credulity and toleration. She knew them capable of so much, and yet thought they performed so little.

She appreciated a man, not for what he was in himself, or what he did in itself, but for the use he made of the talents which had been given him.

But it was her attitude towards children and her way of treating them which chiefly showed me how utterly her training had changed her. Before she went North she hated

children. She punched and pinched her little cousins, she fled from small children when they came to visit, and would have been reduced to painful tears had she been called upon to pick one up. Now, she was if anything only too much *au fait* with the intricacies of the infant imagination. She overhauled the nurseries and clothing of the same young cousins to see that they were in accordance with the laws of hygiene and sanitation. She taught toddly babies mysterious games, she crawled about under tables playing "bears," and seriously frightened my grandmother. She made putty nests in the drawing room for the simplification of natural history to some young friends—much to the detriment of the furniture. She taught the schoolgirls how best to play Hamlet when their only stage properties were a green satin court train which hooked on at the shoulders, and a nigger wig, the top portion of which stood up by means of a spring and wagged.

All the children round about wanted her and loved her; bringing her wonderful discoveries, great secrets, and damaged cats to be marvelled over, discussed and commiserated with.

I love children, I always have loved them, and yet they left me and flocked to her—and she made no bones of the fact that she knew about as much of their infant minds as did their mothers themselves.

I do not know if the world needs Ambleside Students now. I imagine it does. I do not know if the next generation will really be the better and the more healthy minded for their teaching. I imagine it may. But I do know when they ought to have been in existence and where their ministrations would have been of untold use—and that is, at the siege of Troy. In fact had they been in existence then, I doubt that there would have been a Trojan war at all. Helen would have been busily employed—hammering brass work and nails of her fingers. Paris would have been taught that women make a very bad second to the glory of one's country, and Achilles would have understood that it is those generals who are least obtrusive who escape the eye of the war correspondents—and consequently, do the work. In fact, all the bloodshed, the carnage and domestic misery that followed upon the declaration of war in Troy was solely due to the fact that in those benighted days Ambleside with its college and its girls did not exist.